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ZNY CCCCC ZZH (CCY ADB25046 MSI2117-695)  
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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1482  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 002814

NOFORN

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y ( PARA MARKINGS )

DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM  
STATE PASS TO AID FOR ASIA/SCAA  
USFOR-A FOR POLAD  
E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/16/2019  
TAGS: [EAID](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: PLUSES AND MINUSES OF TURKISH PRT IN AFGHANISTAN,S  
NORTH

REF: ANKARA 01217

Classified By: Classified By: IPA Coordinator Dawn Liberi for Reasons 1  
.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C/NF) Summary: Turkey has taken exploratory steps toward establishing a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in northwestern Afghanistan, s Jowzjan Province, with its coverage to extend through Sar-e-pul Province. Jowzjan and Sar-e-pul stand to gain development projects and possibly additional police training, judging by the performance of the Turkish PRT in Wardak Province southwest of Kabul. The move would also likely free up the Swedes, responsible for four provinces in the north, to narrow the focus of their development resources. The Swedes are worried, however, that the Turks, &soft8 approach to security (security in Wardak has deteriorated markedly) would bode ill for the worsening insurgent and criminal challenges in Jowzjan and Sar-e-pul and thus increase the risks to other northern provinces. Nonetheless, the Swedes do not formally oppose expansion of Turkish responsibilities, given Turkey, s status as a NATO member. There may be advantages to Turkey taking on additional responsibilities in the North, but the risk is that security negatives may well outweigh the pluses. End Summary.

The Turkish PRT in Wardak Province

¶2. (C/NF) The Turkish PRT in Wardak Province is civilian-led and has been operating in Wardak Province since November of ¶2006. From its inception, PRT Wardak has followed a &soft8 approach, focused on sponsoring development projects and conducting police training. It strictly avoids any direct, hands-on security work. By minimizing its presence and utilizing police rather than military forces to provide security when traveling in the province, the PRT has sought to foster the perception among the local populace that it is primarily a development-centered organization. There are a limited number of Turkish military at the PRT, but their sole function is to secure the PRT facility itself. The Turks in Wardak do not conduct patrols. In fact, after a visiting U.S. patrol came under attack in 2007, the then-civilian head of the PRT contacted the Embassy to suggest the U.S. military stay away to avoid provoking anti-American sentiment. As security has worsened, however, attitudes at the PRT have changed markedly, with the Turks now welcoming the presence of U.S. forces in the area. All the same, the Turks believe their overall approach has allowed the PRT to make significant strides in developing relationships within those communities where the security situation has permitted them to operate.

13. (C/NF) The Turks have had challenges in implementing their program due to security concerns and difficulties with their implementing agency, the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA). As security has deteriorated, they have found it more and more difficult to implement projects. Part of the problem is the limited number of Turkish police available for movement security. Currently about 25 Turkish police are dual-tasked to provide both convoy security and police training, leaving the PRT struggling to find a balance. Without adequate mobility, TIKA has been forced to postpone or decline implementation of projects in areas that are deemed to be too high-risk. This has now effectively limited the PRT's working area to Maydan Shahr, the provincial capital, since reaching even other fairly secure districts in the province requires traveling through less permissive areas. Between November 2006 and November 2008, the PRT undertook 43 projects of various kinds. For 2009 a total of 56 projects were approved by Ankara, but security concerns have allowed only seven to be implemented.

14. (C/NF) Another factor hindering the PRT's development work appears to be the fact that the PRT does not have its own development funds but must work through a rather bureaucratic process back in Ankara. The PRT identifies potential projects meeting stringent funding criteria and submits these to Ankara for approval. Nearly all projects submitted are ultimately funded and then passed to TIKA for implementation. By the time approvals arrive, however, many projects can no longer be implemented because of worsening security. To make matters worse, the outgoing civilian head of the PRT has confided that Ankara has launched an internal investigation into possible corruption with regard to TIKA's Afghan operation and has relieved at least two TIKA staff of their

duties. According to Wardak Governor Fedai, TIKA uses the same 5 or 6 contractors and, to Fedai's displeasure, these do not include contractors from the province. He worries that communities do not benefit adequately from job creation, and the projects lack the sense of ownership that utilization of locals could bring. The Governor even suggests this has at times created additional security issues as open hostility has arisen between contractors and locals resentful over not being given work. He has also complained privately about what he characterizes as overpricing and shoddy workmanship. Comment: Fedai's points of criticism are sometimes heard in other provinces across the country. End comment.

15. (C/NF) The PRT has built a police training and education center and considers its police mentoring and training program a success. The PRT trains on basic police functions as well as special police skills. The Turks suggest this work has had a positive effect on ANP capabilities. While we presume that evaluation is accurate, it is difficult to make an independent assessment since the Turks do not share with CF elements in Wardak the specifics of their program. They do not followficer in Mazar, the Swedish military at the PRT believe Stockholm is unlikely to try to stand in the way of the Turks. They suggest that the government of Sweden, a non-NATO country, is unlikely to feel able to block the reconfiguration even it wanted to, considering NATO's leadership of ISAF and Turkey's membership in NATO. Moreover, from a military perspective, at least at first glance the change would seem positive, since it would alleviate overstretching of Swedish forces. This is balanced, however, by concern that the Turks would not take over the Swedes, current support mission to the efforts of the Afghan National Security Forces to stamp out insurgents in the troublesome districts of Sayyad, in Sar-e-pul, and Qush Teppeh and Darzab in Jowzjan. Sweden would not want to see those areas become &accepted8 insurgent safe havens ) effectively left alone by the Turks. That would only increase the security risks to Swedish forces operating over the border in Balkh. An alternative, they suggest, would be for Turkish CIMIC teams and Turkey's development actors at a new Turkish PRT to spend more of their development dollars in Jowzjan and Sar-e-pul but leave

Sweden to continue taking the lead in security matters there, acting more as a task force than a PRT in those areas.

Turkey might consider that situation ideal, they suggest, as it would get credit for development work while Sweden would have to take the rap for anything that goes poorly on the security front.

Turkish Advance Party?

19. (C/NF) A company of 120 Turkish soldiers, ostensibly sent to the north to serve as Election Support Forces, remains in place in Mazar. This unit has somewhat the appearance of an advance party for a Turkish PRT. It includes a CIMIC team, med cap personnel, intelligence personnel and force protection assets. We understand the Turks have been slow to brief the Regional Command-North commander on their plans. He wants them to deploy to the difficult Ghormach district, currently administratively attached to southernmost Faryab Province; and if they will not go there, he does not want them to leave their camp in Mazar. Adding to the confusion, the Turkish Consul General in Mazar told our State PRT rep that he personally is not sure a Turkish PRT would do any more development projects in Jowzjan and Sar-e-Pul than are already being implemented there by the Turkish development agency.

Comment

10. (C/NF) The creation of a new Turkish PRT covering Jowzjan and Sar-e-Pul would not appear to be an unalloyed blessing, at least if the Turks implement the model followed by their PRT in Wardak. We suspect the alternative of leaving the Swedes to address security, just as U.S. forces have had to deploy to do the same in Wardak, would be appealing to the Turks. But if, as the Turkish Consul General suggests, there might not be a net increase in Turkish development projects in the two provinces, the possible security issues may outweigh the benefits. Before welcoming a Turkish deployment of a PRT in Jowzjan, post recommends Department query the Turks closely about their plans for addressing the worsening security situation in their proposed new AOR as well as their plans to carry out additional development projects.

EIKENBERRY